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ABSTRACT

Career education is a comprehensive educational program which begins in kindergarten and continues through the adult years. The need for developing career competence and awareness starts long before the student reaches the community college age. To effectively reach all populations, career education must be integrated into the curriculum at all educational levels. The elementary and junior high school levels should concentrate on occupational orientation and an awareness of work roles and requirements, while the high school level should prepare for job entry and concurrently for further education. The post-secondary institutions must be designed to fit career aspirations and requirements by providing meaning and purpose to job preparation as well as by preparing some students for education leading to a baccalaureate and perhaps graduate professional preparation. Thus, from kindergarten through post-secondary education, students should receive a myriad of career opportunities and first-hand knowledge from which they will chart the course of their lives. Implications for post-secondary education are discussed. (SB)

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CAREER EDUCATION AND THE COMMUNITY JUNIOR COLLEGE*

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CAREER EDUCATION AND THE COMMUNITY JUNIOR COLLEGE*

I am delighted for this opportunity to be your speaker this evening. I bring special greetings to you from the U.S. Commissioner of Education, Sidney P. Marland, Jr. who is unable to be with you and has asked me to speak in his place. Knowing of his interest in my topic which is career education and the community college, I can assure you, however, that he is with us in spirit at your seminar.

As you all know, career education has been identified by Dr. Marland as a top priority for the United States Office of Education. This important emphasis at the highest National level also exists at the State levels of educational leadership. This is not a fad or a passing fancy; it is rather a concept that has gradually but steadily emerged with careful consideration of a national need--a need for all students to have a more meaningful education. Therefore, we may well ask ourselves at this time what concept of career education protends for our educational programs.

WHAT IS CAREER EDUCATION?

Career education is a comprehensive educational program which begins in kindergarden and continues through the adult years. It involves a restructuring of the basic school subjects around the theme of career development. Elementary students are helped to become aware of the wide range of career options in our economy, to develop self-awareness, and to develop favorable attitudes about the psychological and

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*Address by Dr. Robert M. Worthington, Associate Commissioner, Bureau of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education, at the National Seminar for State Directors of Community-Junior Colleges, January 10, 1972, Columbus, Ohio.

social significance of work. Junior high school students explore specific clusters of occupations through hands-on experiences and field observation, as well as through classroom instruction, and they begin to develop career decisionmaking skills. Senior high school students prepare for job-entry in a selected career area through classroom, laboratory, and on-the-job activities and concurrently prepare for further education. The basic academic subjects become more relevant because the student is helped to perceive the relationship to future career goals. All exiting high school students are assisted by the school in securing placement either in a job, in a postsecondary occupational program, or in a college. College students enroll in higher education with a purpose and a clear sense of direction, focused on a career goal which they have established for themselves.

INTEGRAL PART OF THE OVERALL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The need for developing career competence and awareness obviously starts long before the student reaches community college age. Career education, if it is to effectively reach all populations, must be integrated into the curriculum at all levels. This means a pyramid organizational structure, with one component building upon another. The elementary and junior high school levels should concentrate on occupational orientation aimed at bringing about an awareness of work roles and requirements to children, perhaps for the first time, for children are often completely mystified by what their fathers say they do "at work." Small wonder that they have little understanding of the multitude of jobs which exist in our society.

The high school career level education should be available for all students. And this kind of education must be accompanied by meaningful guidance and counseling.

The postsecondary institutions must be designed to fit career aspirations and requirements by providing meaning and purpose to job preparation, as well as to prepare some students for education leading to a baccalaureate and perhaps graduate professional preparation. Throughout the students' school years, exploratory hands-on experience, site visits, and cooperative educational experiences will bring the student face-to-face with the world in which he is preparing to live. More and more of our youth will "go to college" whether it be a junior or community college, a technical institute, a branch campus of a four-year college, or other postsecondary institutions, private or public, to prepare for the many attractive "action" oriented jobs at the technician or similarly specialized level.

So from kindergarten through postsecondary education, students should receive a myriad of career opportunities and first-hand knowledge from which they will chart the course of their lives. Activities which explore many potential options in the world of work must be available for all students. For only in this way can students focus on their strength and their limitations in relation to available options.

It is highly unlikely that education will ever again be considered terminal at any given point or level. On the contrary, career education is apt to become a lifelong process. Skills that are learned today will, too soon, become obsolete in the rapidly changing future. This new concept

calls for turning out graduates with minds and spirits that accept without question the idea of continued and continuous learning. Lifelong learning appears to be the only hope we have of mastering our advancing technology.

Support for Career Education

In January 1971, shortly after Dr. Marland was appointed as U.S. Commissioner of Education, he delivered a speech before the convention of the National Association of Secondary School Principals in Houston, Texas, calling for immediate steps which would bring about the large scale implementation of career education. This was the beginning of a series of speeches and actions which the Commissioner has taken to launch what has become, in a very short period of time, a major National thrust in career education.

Hence, a year later, we are able to describe these current developments in career education at the National level. Under Office of Education sponsorship, there are six sites which have been selected for the development of large-scale demonstration models of career education in public school systems. The sites are located in the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Michigan, and New Jersey. Assistance in the development of curriculum materials will be provided by Ohio State University's Center for Vocational and Technical Education, the Center which you will have the opportunity to visit tomorrow and at which time you will hear more about these new school based models.

In the meantime, fifty-two "mini-models" of career education programs are already in the operational stage as "exemplary programs" under

Part D funding from the Vocational Education Act. One of these "mini-models," each of which functions in the setting of a local school district, has been activated in each State, as well as in the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Recently, discretionary FY 1972 Part C funds under the Vocational Education Act have been allocated to the States, to enable each State to initiate another "mini-model" of career education at an additional site. This provides for a nationwide network of career education model efforts, with the six large-scale demonstration models plus more than 100 "mini-models" spread geographically across the States and Territories.

There are several States and numerous local districts that have begun, on their own initiative, to also develop and implement career education programs. I direct your attention to these models because of their potential for greatly improved school programs in local districts broadly distributed across the country.

In addition, there are three other "models" testing the concept of career education, again under Office of Education sponsorship. The other theree will be based on the home, involving extensive use of television instruction for adults and out-of-school youth; on employment in an industrial plant or office; and on special residential facilities such as boarding schools or camps where adults and teenagers would live temporarily for intensive career training.

Implications for Post-Secondary Students

With these developments in mind, I know that you as State Directors of Community Colleges are most interested in the predictable consequences for the future community college student.

For we are speaking of a concept that may become a major component of the schooling provided some 80 percent of the Nation's students-- in contrast to the 25 percent currently enrolled in vocational technical education programs. This could mean a "new" student -- a career educated student-- one who has had the benefit of an entirely new curriculum, with vocational skill training playing a key role. For career education is not merely a substitute for "vocational education," or "general education," or "college-preparatory education;" instead, it is a blending of all three into an entirely new curriculum.

In a speech before the International Conference on Education held in Geneva, Switzerland in September 1971, Commissioner Marland outlined what career education will mean to students.

-- The K-6 student will begin as early as Kindergarten through revised curriculums to relate reading, writing, and arithmetic to the varied ways by which adults earn a living.

-- The junior high student will select three or four of 15 occupational "clusters" -- broad groupings of related occupations such as marine sciences, construction, fine arts, and health -- and begin exploring the nature of careers in each.

-- The senior high student will concentrate on one or two cluster, developing sufficient skill in a specific occupation to qualify for a job. All students would have an opportunity to enjoy actual work experience during their high school years through cooperative arrangements with business, industry, and public institutions and agencies.

Thus, the student who enrolls at your community colleges could indeed have a different set of abilities and career interests. But therein lies the richness of the community colleges for your institutions have already achieved an enviable record for meeting the changing educational requirements of our society. In particular, I am aware of the excellent response of community colleges to occupational education programs and adult education programs.

But at the risk of repetition, I would like to emphasize again that career education has implications for all postsecondary programs and not simply those considered vocational or technical.

On this subject, may I call your attention to the December report of the Task Force of the Education Commission of the States on Occupational Education in Postsecondary Education entitled "Vocation as Calling." The

major theme of this report is the need for career education and occupational preparation at all levels. The Task Force calls for a fundamental realignment of priorities, specifically suggesting (and I quote) "that we return to the concept of education as career preparation, of vocation in the classical sense of what a person does with his life, his life, his "Calling."

The Task Force Members further make the following statements, which I quote because of their relevance to our discussion:

(1) that occupational education must be seen within the total context of education; (2) that the concept of occupational education in the restricted sense of skill preparation for immediate entry into the work force needs to be broadened to include the cluster approach to occupational preparation necessary for orientation to the gainful occupations and career planning much earlier in the educational process than is now generally the case; and (3) that, so conceived, vocational, occupational, technical, and career education not only are integral to and not alternatives for the educational process at all levels, but must be taken into account and reflected in all major educational decisions and priority determinations in local, institutional, state, and federal settings now and in the future if the educational structures and strategies for revitalizing the nation's educational system are to meet the needs of the contemporary world.

Among the other issues emphasized in the Task Force report is the necessity for coordination and articulation among the diverse institutions that offer occupational education in the context of vocation as "calling" or "life work." The report states that "such education is not the exclusive prerogative of any one type of institution but may and should take place in a variety of settings including senior colleges and universities, community and junior colleges, technical institutions, and vocational-technical schools, technical-vocational high schools, comprehensive high schools, and other agencies (public, private, or proprietary) as may contribute to manpower development and utilization." We too recognize the need at the Federal level for better articulation and coordination regarding occupational education and I can assure you that I am personally making this one of my highest priorities in my new position, I should be glad to hear from you or your institutions relative to how we can improve in this area.

I am sure that you recall the recommendations of the ECS Task Force on Community and Junior Colleges in their report of April 1971, namely, that in respect to career education, the community college is urged to serve the needs of individual students-- to recognize that one objective of all education is preparation for an occupation. The Community College Task Force also spoke of the special need for coordination in the area of occupational education.

HIGHER EDUCATION AMENDMENTS

Before closing, I should like to review very briefly with you Title XIV, that is, the Occupational Education Title of the Higher Education Amendments of 1971. As you undoubtedly are aware, the Congress will consider in conference the House and Senate versions for the amendments to the Higher Education Act.

Among the provisions of the Occupational Education Title, originally included in the House bill, funds would be authorized for the introduction of occupational preparation, counseling and placement in elementary and secondary schools.

A second issue emphasized in this title is the improvement and expansion of postsecondary occupational courses. The Occupational Education Program is based upon legislation introduced by Congressmen Al Quie of Minnesota, Roman Pucinski of Illinois and a number of other Members who desire to improve the Federal administration-- and coordination-- of vocational and manpower programs.

Since the bill specifies that training and vocational education, within occupational education, vocational, and technical education in community and junior colleges must be placed in a new Bureau of Occupational Education, I invite your participation in the review of this title as Congress proceeds to consider all of the Higher Education Amendments.

An effective local, State and federal partnership in the development of flexible systems of career education to meet the needs of the States and the Nation will depend upon people like you. Community colleges are particularly crucial in any plan to provide continuing education programs for adults. All of us who have dedicated our lives to vocational or occupational education, whatever the institution might be, must now work together in reforming American education to make the schools truly relevant and meaningful for every student, and that's what career education is all about. I should hope that this seminar may be considered the beginning then of a long and very close working association between the State Directors of Community Junior Colleges and the Bureau of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education.